Swap

Introduction

The recent incident with Neelo must have shocked a lot of them. Including me.

Not to say I interact with him a lot, more like I browse his posts as I find many of them amusing. Sometimes they end up in my feed. There is a certain charm in his directness.

Luckily, everything ended well. I talked to Neelo, Yolk, Cotton, and others who were directly involved in those events. I also looked some of the materials from the Floriverse department at RIUoT[1].

Then, based on the information I received, I wrote the story and put it in the public domain, at the Library of Artiverse.

This is only a small but very entertaining part of our story. Some will simply be interested. Some will draw conclusions.

Text and Design – **Artem**

Materials and Illustrations – **Artifyber**

Library of Fyberverse

I

It was a cloudy day. There were even streaks of subdued light through the clouds. The light, drizzling rain had already stopped and a pleasant, refreshing coolness hung in the air.

Against this background, as if lost in the midst of other skyscrapers, at the edge of the old, sleepy park, stood the slender monument of the Omniverse Building, with its prominent octagonal tower, a ledge rising above two lateral, vertical volumes.

In one of them, from the window of an office on the floor directly below the laboratory greenhouses, Kage looked out, slightly immersed in his thoughts. In the back of the office, at her desk, Cotton sat organizing her materials.

— I don't mean to upset you, but it seems to me, – Kage said, turning to Cotton, – that you're spreading yourself thin. On more of the work itself, rather than looking at the quality of it.

— Quality? What's wrong with it? – Cotton asked perplexed.

— Uh, I meant the significance of your work. – Kage corrected himself. – It's small and insignificant. In my opinion.

Rabbit thought for a moment. Of course, she could completely change the organization of her work and the structure of the works, but she didn't see much sense in such a rearrangement.

Moreover, the repeated division of the object of research into many small topics was perceived by her as a good way to achieve unambiguity, systematicity and definiteness – to better meet these important criteria of scientific knowledge.

In response to these arguments, the fox only threw in something about redundancy.

He thought that there was a limit to this desire for unambiguity, when it became a tautology. Sub-topics can be grouped into something larger, not only without losing their meaning, but also better presented in context and abstracted from the unimportant.

But which approach is correct? And to what extent? Does it depend on the topic at all? Or maybe – it is just a matter of personal preferences of a particular scientist.

This can be tested in practice, either by purposefully setting such a task for oneself or by reflecting on already existing practical experience.

Who would have thought that very soon our specialists will have such an opportunity. By someone's naive stupidity…

◆ ◆ ◆

Suddenly Cotton glanced at one of the open apps, and her eyes rounded.

— Kage, Kage! Look what's happening! Someone's messing with the telepipe[2]…

II

In the dark wood living room, Neelo was reclining on the coffee-colored sofa opposite the glass-covered square coffee table. The subdued light from the window softly illuminated his fresh face and vigorous, lemon figure. His whole being expressed that active movement which existed in himself, that inner source of self-movement.

As usual, he was nimbly leafing through his Fluere SocIde. One could see that the lemon cat was not really reading. His attention was more attracted by brightly colored posts with pictures. Which was quite in line with the concept of this social network – short, attractive bursts of micro-publications-ideas.

Even if, at first glance, this way of presenting information does not look serious, it can be used to attract attention to complex topics and emphasize the main point. And those who are interested in more will simply follow the link…

So among the posts about new exhibitions at Art Avenue Gallery, Metropolis Lounge Club events, the Experimental Music Meeting at Essay Hall of Teksui, and new paintings by Artibun, Neelo came across an amusing post by Nala.

She was holding a box of little flories, some jumping on her face, which apparently amused her greatly.

There was a small note below it, something about breeding flories.

Neelo, as usual, didn't read it, but he saw the link in the post and tapped it curiously. He saw a large and colorful table with all the flories known to the Botanical Society, of which Nala was a member. Under each florie was its name, pronouns, gender, and classifications for anatomy, species, and floressence.

Neelo scrutinized the entire table. His gaze fell on a funny looking lemon florie – Lineko. Neelo felt some remarkable similarity to him. It seemed to him that it was him.

Putting his feet on the floor and leaning on the back of the couch, the lemon cat indulged in daydreams about how fun it would be to voyage to Floriverse, experiencing all its strangeness…

His thoughts were interrupted by a private message from Yolk. She planned to discuss some work issues with Neelo. The confusing notes he left behind were incomprehensible to her.

At the end of the conversation, Neelo had shared with Yolk his ideas about an unusual voyage to the Floriverse. It would seem that this idle interest should not have been developed… But Yolk suddenly blurted out that traveling between worlds was no more complicated than flying within a single world.

— Transports, manipulators. And they work similarly. No more complicated than flying to the next town. Can I come up?

— Come on! But how do we get there?

— Yeah, it's at the Omniverse. Special telepipes.

In just a few minutes, Yolk showed herself through the window, standing on her hoverflip, and slipped into the living room. She settled down on the couch next to Neelo, spreading her semi-liquid arms, and rubbed his ears.

— Wouldn't it be easier to customize your flip to fly to the Floriverse? – Neelo grinned.

— Well… Let's trust the experts… – Yolk gaffed.

— Of course! – Neelo nodded and got up from the couch.

Yolk got up, waved over the window sill and plopped into the flip. Neelo, followed her, sliding the window wider, and sat down next to her.

The flying saucer tilted slightly and moved away from the building. Then it leveled off and flew along Citrus Avenue, gaining speed smoothly and creating no inertia.

III

Neelo and Yolk were flying over Teksui. It was breathtaking to see the expanse of land before them.

Monumental skyscrapers alternated with wide park alleys interspersed with fountains and canals under a canopy of greenery. Buildings, from different angles, were formed into complete compositions of swift and clear forms.

The Heisen Heaven Building was rising by ledges, the cubic volumes of the Material Institute Center complex were visible.

Each building could be both a dominant and a background for others. And all of them made up the unified composition of the great city.

Finally, the gray monument of the Omniverse Building appeared ahead. Flip crossed Veurs Park, with its flowerbeds, fountains, and sculptural groups symbolizing the six universes, and sat right in front of the main entrance to the university.

Neelo was the first to jump out of the saucer and run up to the entrance. But the imposing institute building absorbed his attention. The lemon cat looked around, trying to encompass it with his gaze. He didn't even notice that he was standing there with his mouth open…

— C'mon, c'mon! – called out Yolk, who was already standing at the very door.

Recovering, Neelo turned around and ran after her.

The lobby space was spacious and elegant in gray. It was bordered by white panels at the bottom. Scalloped cascades of straight, vertical lines of light-colored shades ran along the walls, intersected by the same

horizontal lines, and folded in a rectangular grid. The lobby was placed at the front of the building and spanned two floors.

Yolk and Neelo approached the checkpoint. A face appeared on a monitor built into the column opposite and inquired as to the purpose of their visit.

— We are from the botanical society. – threw Neelo – We need to check something…

— What is the purpose of your visit? Who are you and what do you do? – asked the monitor.

— I am Neelo. We're working together with Nala. She published an article there. Recently. And Yolk is with me together.

Neelo even showed the very same post. The face on the monitor disappeared and was replaced by a flashing question mark. Apparently some sort of check was being performed.

Yolk had already partially squeezed through the gap between the transparent turnstile doors as the face reappeared on the monitor.

— Come in. We've been working with Nala and found out she's paired with you. – the monitor winked.

The doors slid open and Yolk turned around.

— How do we get through… To the lab… Where are the florivores-telepipes? – she mumbled uncertainly.

Floor and office numbers appeared on the monitor.

At the back of the lobby, beyond the line of turnstiles, was a door that stood on a small flight of stairs, and on either side of it were two

entrances to a corridor that closed in a ring around the central volume of the building.

After finding and looking the Omniverse plan on the institute's website, Yolk headed for the right entrance, toward the elevator lobby of one of the wings. Neelo followed her.

IV

The Omniverse Building was divided into six RIUoT (Research Institute of Universes of Teksui) departments. Each was dedicated to the study of a single world – Deltadim, Digirel, Floriverse, Nonsens, (Void of) Nadir, Hizen and were equipped accordingly. They were so autonomous that they each had their own administration and even separate elevator lobbies with separate floor numbering.

But despite this, the departments quite interacted with each other, working at the intersection of scientific areas.

Thus, to get to their chosen office F8-10, Neelo and Yolk first crossed corps V (Nadir) and N (Nonsense), and, having made a change on the escalator, went up another eight floors.

Exiting the elevator, they passed a corridor finished in various shades of gray and decorated with rectangular patterns of lines. There were similar patterns on the semi-columns, with lights inscribed in them, on the floor. On the ceiling were square caissons, lighted around the perimeter.

Approaching the study, Yolk tried moving the handle, shallowly cut into the canvas, but the door would not budge.

— Any ideas? – Neelo urged her impatiently.

Yolk lowered her ears and thought for a moment. But then she exclaimed:

— Easy! Through the window.

— And fall?

Yolk ignored the leading question and ran a little farther and turned the corner and went to the windows. Neelo rushed after her. Yolk pushed one of the frames aside and looked around.

— Great, the nearest window is on the right. – she noted.

Yolk began to bend gently over the window sill. Her feet barely touched the floor, while her stringy body was already stretched out and hovering over the street at the height of the fortieth floor.

But there was no time to enjoy the panoramic views now.

Yolk reached the window of the study and poured herself onto it. The window was slightly ajar and Yolk began to seep into the gap between the frames. Once her hand was deep enough, Yolk pushed on the window and could barely move it – her stretched body was no longer obeying her. Yolk tiredly moved her head and hands over the window sill.

Neelo, instantly realizing what to do, climbed on top of Yolk and slammed into her. She, losing her balance, began to twist and stretch even more. For a moment, the lemon cat pulled into it felt like he was drowning, falling into the street.

But then Yolk tensed up – her entire body turned into a solid current and rushed out the window. As she flew over the window sill, Yolk flopped to the floor in a wave and stretched out on it, cushioning the impact of Neelo's jumping out of her body.

They found themselves in a small room decorated with elegant geometric patterns of lines on the walls, similar to the ones they had seen. There were white work desks nearby, and a massive counter against one wall. The interior was enlivened by the same white pots of plants on the counter and nearby. Yolk went to the door in the portal behind the counter and tried to open it, but only smeared her hand on the canvas. Sighing, Yolk headed back to the windows to climb through the neighboring window of the inner office.

Neelo looked around and noticed the card. It lay lonely on the shelf of a half-open safe standing next to one of the desks…

— They leave it here to get in. – Neelo thought – Who would take it? But then why lock it?

Meanwhile, Yolk had managed to flow into the room with the telepipe. Shaking herself, she was surprised to find Neelo standing next to her. Without asking any questions, Yolk waved her flinty ears in the direction of the telepipe.

The telepipe was a white rectangular enclosure on a dark purple base. A transparent rectangular door overhung one side of the enclosure, enclosing a portal chamber. To the left, in a square recess was a control panel, which was a screen without any physical buttons.

Yolk took out the remote and, after poking at it a bit, was able to open the automatic door.

In general, the appearance of the device, a bit like an oven or a lathe, clearly hinted that it was not intended for «manned flight» at all. But Neelo was not even embarrassed by the presence of some shelves and frames inside the portal chamber, which he simply dumped out, making room for himself.

Seeing that the lemon cat was curled up in a ball in the chamber, Yolk tapped on the screen and the door slid smoothly back open.

Inexperienced with telepipes and relying only on the intuitive interface of the console, Yolk selected the «Prepare» macro program and started it.

After a couple seconds, Neelo's eyes rounded. Opening his mouth wide, he desperately tried to catch the air that had suddenly disappeared.

But strength left Neelo, his eyes closed and he unconsciously dropped his head to his knees.

The frightened Yolk didn't know what to do. Losing all concentration, she rasped her hands over the remote. Yolk pulled some element with the Floriverse icon into the body of the program and started it… The camera lit up green, and then Neelo disappeared in a purple flash.

A little while later, Kage and Cotton appeared in the lab. They saw a certain yolk rabbit sitting by the telepipe door, jabbing at it and shuddering with all its viscous bulk.

— Who are you? What are you doing here? – Kage asked.

— I’m… I’m… a murderer… – mumbled Yolk.

— What? – Cotton wondered.

Kage quickly walked over to Yolk, and began to jerk her slipping body upwards.

— Get up!

Slowly and with great difficulty, Yolk stood up, her legs heaving and writhing. She felt as if her consciousness had gone to the very core, and the protein body around her was something fluctuating, ghostly and inert.

— I didn't want this… But Neelo is dead, I strangled him to death! – Yolk squeezed out.

— But why is it empty? – Pointing at the camera, Cotton wondered.

— I tried to send him to the universe of flories… and…

Yolk described the sequence of her actions rather vaguely, but the indication of some kind of «Preparation» was enough. Cotton picked up the remote control lying on the floor and began to look through the logs, where she found both the macro program that had been executed and the unfortunate element in it.

This macro program created the necessary environment in the portal chamber. Including a deep vacuum to exclude any unnecessary reimbursement of matter in it, before performing the pairing. A randomly

selected unit transferred Neelo to the Floriverse, and the parameters of that transfer were known.

— We'll figure it out, – Kage said a little thoughtfully, leaning toward the console.

Yolk was still standing, staring into the telepipe.

— You can go now, – Cotton smiled softly.

— How? – Yolk blurted out in a dropped voice.

— The same way you came here. But maybe you'll find an easier way, – Kage grinned and nodded toward the open front door.

Yolk wandered the corridors of the Omniverse Building for a long time. She was immersed in her core, in her heavy and inarticulate thoughts. Finally she came to the front doors of the lobby. Yolk looked up at the deltaspark. The falling light illuminated her sad face.

V

When Nala returned home, she didn't see her favorite lemon cat. At first she wasn't surprised, because Neelo, in contrast to her, wasn't very organized and often acted impulsively. But it had been a long time, and Neelo hadn't made himself known. Nala was even more embarrassed by the lack of any posts from him, and this despite Neelo's sociable nature…

She couldn't stand it any longer, so she posted a question on her feed:

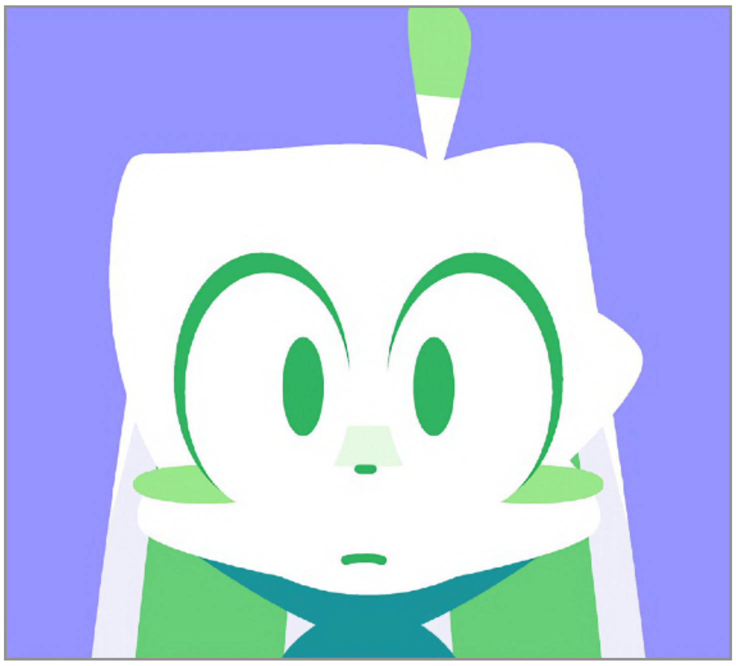
— WHERE IS NEELO?

No one responded to the post itself. However, about twenty minutes later, it was quoted by Artibun:

— Sorry to break it to you guys but Neelo is dead. Yolk suffocated him to death.

«— WHERE IS NEELO?»

Nala didn't realize what was going on. She stared dumbly at this unexpected answer. Then she turned around and stared at the window with unseeing eyes.



Nala couldn't believe it. What she had seen as natural, inalienable, and permanent was now gone. Yet she felt that everything seemed to be the same. That Neelo just wasn't back yet. But, in fact, he was really gone… Just gone…

◆ ◆ ◆

Yolk, who had returned, sat in her bathroom for a long time. She did not comprehend the circumstances. The memory of what had happened just pressed down on her and fogged her mind. She didn't want to think about anything. It was hard for her to think about anything at all.

A little later, when Yolk had recovered a little, she reluctantly decided to tell what had happened. She didn't want to keep this fog to herself any longer. Yolk, seeing that Artibun was online, wrote to her in private messages. And Yolk had completely forgotten about Kage's last words….

It didn't take long to get a response. Arti seemed to take it a little easier and hurried to comfort Yolk with kind words. A little later, the lilac rabbit would report the incident when she came across Nala's worried post.

The news of Neelo's death quickly went public. The unfortunate quote garnered quite a number of comments. Many of them expressed despair at what had happened, and quite emotionally.

Artem, however, thought that Arti was only joking. Since she just didn't feel like writing to Neelo, to whom she had once dedicated a whole series of her graphic works. Of course, the coffee cat would soon be convinced of his mistake, even though it wouldn't rule out Arti's reluctance to write Neelo.

◆ ◆ ◆

Meanwhile, Kage and Cotton cleaned up the F8-10 lab and, back in their office, immediately began looking for a solution. Every problem is a

contradiction, a struggle of opposing tendencies. Resolution leads to development. Even though this additional scientific practice was not part of the plan.

Cotton dug through her numerous, indexed and already well organized materials, using intellectual search. For his part, Kage was simply thinking about the problem in general, while looking at nothing in particular. The particular he was trying to define in the general, but keeping the whole area in his head was quite difficult for him.

Finally Kage turned to Cotton, sharing his generalized, even somewhat detached ideas with her. But that was exactly what Cotton needed. She quickly and without any intellectual search identified a set of needed materials. Then Cotton, together with Kage, began to develop the solution itself. Naturally, they also used the data from the telepipe, in which Neelo unsuccessfully tried to breathe vacuum.

They treated this work calmly, not getting emotionally involved. Both realized that the more you give in to emotion, the worse you do. Not only do you not eliminate, but you reinforce the cause of your pain.

— So, we need to determine the current state of change and interrelationships in matter in relation to Neelo, in order to return him to the Deltadim, in normal form. Everything we need is there, we just need to determine the inputs on the spot by sending a robot equipped with a special connector to Lineko. The data will be transmitted to the telepipe controller and processed. After that, Neelo will be in the portal. – Cotton concluded.

— Now, by the way, let's find the robot – threw Kage and launched an intelligent search.

Based on life form and social reciprocity, the search gave him Ithi's contact. After writing a message but never hearing back from her, the fox said:

— I'll try to make arrangements with her and bring her in tomorrow.

— Yes. – the rabbit smiled.

After that Kage gathered his few belongings and left the office.

VI

Nala lay on the bed, covered with the blanket up to her chest, and with her hands on it, staring at the ceiling. She was simply awake. Nothing put her to sleep or blurred her consciousness. But by morning, she did take a little nap.

A little while later, all sweaty and broken by sleep deprivation, the rabbit got up with great difficulty. Rubbing her eyes and staggering, she made her way to the dining room, where she poured herself a glass of cold water and sat down beside it. Everything around her seemed somehow monochromatic, noisy…

Nala involuntarily jerked her paw and knocked over her own glass. Without paying attention to it, she rested her heavy head on her hands and fell back into slumber.

◆ ◆ ◆

The polished elevator doors slid open. Ithi and Kage crossed the corridor and went into the office. Cotton was still sitting in her seat, scrutinizing something amid the floating virtual windows.

She was characterized by some amazing ease in everything. The rabbit was floating nonchalantly above the world, letting through its airy essence endless processes of change.

Cotton sat there quietly all night and methodically did her work, only occasionally drifting off into slumber.

Kage gestured Ithi to the couch by the entrance, then walked over to the desk.

— As you can see, I've enlisted Ithi to help with our case. She knows what needs to be done.

— Good – smiled Cotton. – I've made some changes… And prepared a request for access to the lab.

Processing requests is part of economic and social management. It looks like sending to the control system a special document containing the request data, including reasoning and additional materials. By processing a lot of data on the current state of the economy as a whole and its individual areas, a certain decision is made. At the same time, anyone can see how the system's answer was formed and change their request.

The management system is organized in the form of Congress – a global server that includes many specialized sub-servers, including university ones. Congress is also integrated with social networks, allowing for a better assessment of the needs of society as a whole and of each individual member.

Interconnectivity, extensibility, adaptability, and verifiability ensure an adequate assessment of the environment and the effectiveness of societal and economic regulation.

The request made by Cotton was granted. Access was granted to certain offices and the equipment there necessary for the operation to find and recover Neelo.

But yesterday, our scientists had to write a request just to get into Yolk's lab, which, of course, delayed them a bit. But that's the price of verifiability.

Cotton, Kage and Eatie headed for room F12-2. Like F8-10, the equipment portion of it was a separate interior room. But that didn't matter anymore, since all the doors they needed simply opened automatically, just by walking up to them.

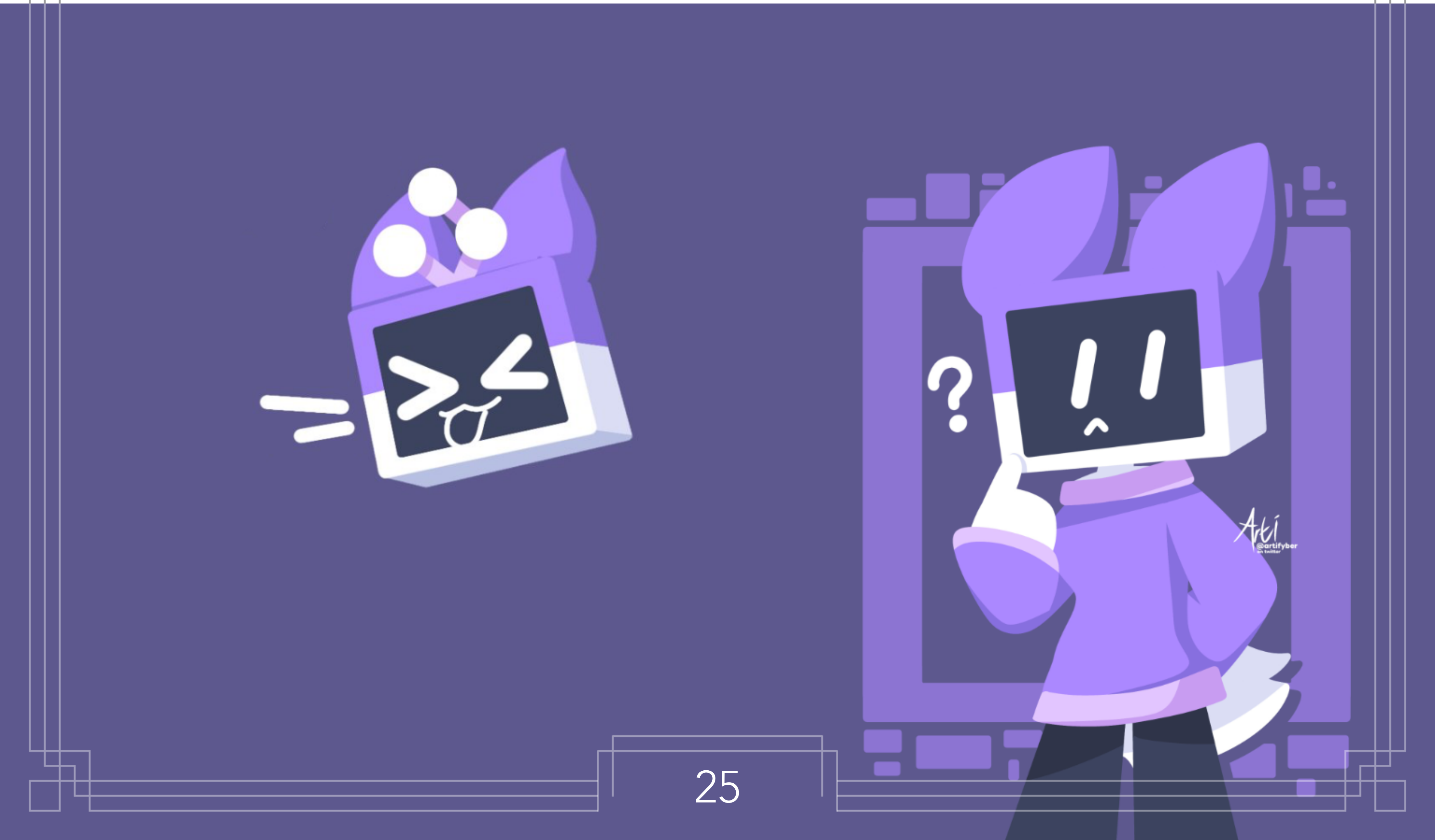
Kage sat Ithi in a chair, removed the antenna unit from her head and replaced it with a special transmitter. He then inserted a wire into her and copied a special set of files into her memory. Next, the robocroller made the necessary synchronization.

Meanwhile, Cotton prepared the telepipe. She checked and set the necessary settings, then imported and prepared to run the special program.

This modification of the telepipe was different from the one Neelo and Yolk had used unsuccessfully. It was taller, its portal chamber took up more space and was bounded by transparent walls on three sides.

One of those walls split in two, half of it sliding to the side, revealing the passage inside. Ithi settled herself in the center of the chamber, after which the transparent wall was closed.

Cotton started the program. The portal chamber filled with green light, then changed to purple. Ithi disappeared.



VII

Lemon cat moved into Floriverse in an unconscious state. There was no telling how much time passed before he woke up.

Neelo and Lineko were the same entity, but in different forms, in different universes. Now consciousness appeared to be centered in one Lineko, and Neelo was gone. This flories belonged to the species Vita and was a lemon on four paw-leaves without a stem. Its floressence was Blossomia.

A vast meadow spread out before Lineko. Somewhere in the distance towered trees. On one of them there was a house where two flories were sitting and looking somewhere.

The fresh air was absorbed by the entire surface of Lineko's body and saturated him.

Looking around, the lemon wandered off in a random direction.

After walking some distance towards the grove, he spotted some cute orange florie that looked a lot like him. They approached and looked at each other intently.

Lineko was the first to speak – he wanted to get better acquainted with the orange. But he understood by «acquaintance» a little differently, which caused an embarrassment…

As soon as they were close, the orange clawed at Lineko's ear, something the lemon clearly hadn't expected. But at the same instant, the orange let go of him, and shrank back, recoiling to the side. Such a sour taste the orange had clearly not expected.

Coming to his senses, Lineko backed up and disappeared into the grass.

He wandered aimlessly through the meadow. The throbbing pain from the socustoma echoed in his left ear.

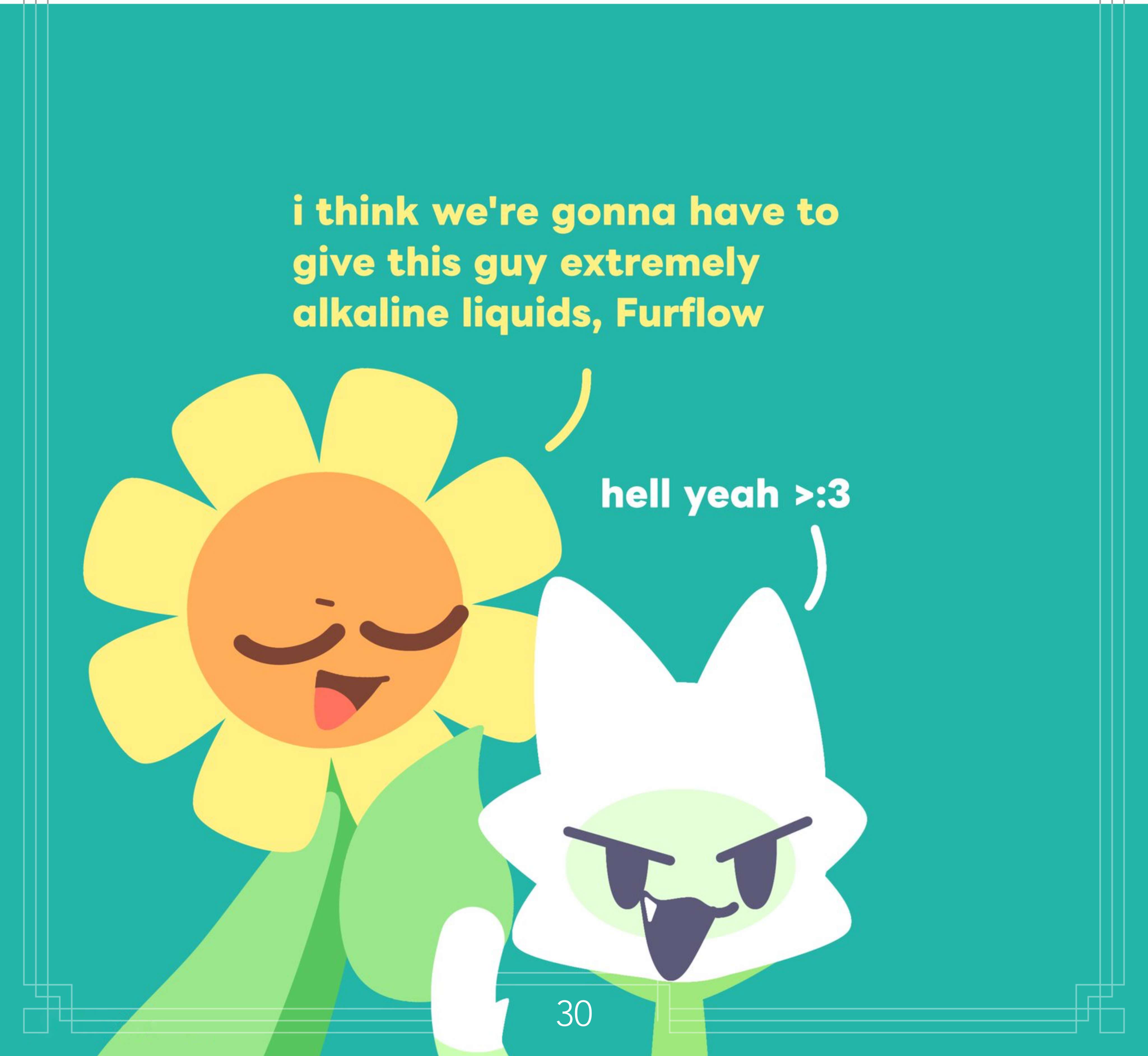
Here he met his gaze with some purple flower. But the flower suddenly pulled its stem to the side and returned to the same spot with its inflorescence in a circle.

— Are you embarrassed? – Lineko asked, to which the strange flower only squeezed his eyes shut and grinned stupidly. Lemon walked on.

When he got very close to the grove, he met a pink, iris florie. She was listening to music from a portable record player, swaying to the beat of the swing. Lineko didn't bother to distract her.

Limon sat down nearby and pondered. What should he do now? He had no idea what was going on in Deltadim. Nala? What would they do without each other? Would they be able to find him and put things back the way they were? Or would a new life begin for him?

Every such question made him cringe. His mood fluctuated. Then he felt emotionally uplifted by the way he'd discovered the Floriverse. Then he was panic-stricken at having lost everything. Then he was bewildered at the uncertain prospects of his new place.



Lineko turned around. Standing in front of him were two flori, a sunflower and that fluffy flories he had seen in the treehouse before.

— That's right! I had oxidized the orange! They saw the whole thing! – flashed through Lineko's mind.

Lemon felt like crying. How could he be to blame for something he just couldn't know about?

Apparently in response to Lineko's reaction, sunflower pulled out a watering can and…

…began pouring water on Furfy. She was perplexed.

— Relax. We're just kidding. – Sunflower grinned, and added:

— You've oxidized one mood, and now you're oxidizing your own.

— Yes… Water is a compromise solution to the struggle of opposites… – mumbled the wet Furfy.

But Lineko didn't hear them anymore. He was running, not knowing what to do. He didn't know what to do, what to think, what to ask for…

Suddenly, a purple figure rushed after him, making strange noises. Finally, Lineko found himself right in front of it.

— Neelo! We found you!

From the voice and familiar outline, the lemon instantly recognized Ithi. An incomprehensible sensation began to fill him, the pain in his ear disappeared, everything around him began to blur.

Damn it Ithi. Where the FUCK are we???

Finally confused, Lineko was no longer shy in his expressions. In his semi-rhetorical question he sublimated all his bewilderment and despair.

Ithi was apparently excited too, causing her to mess up a bit in the parameters of the program she needed to run at her place.

Lineko disappeared. Realizing her mistake, but recognizing that there was no way to correct it, she started the second program she had agreed upon for her own return.

VIII

After a while, Ithi was back in the lab, encased in the telepipe. Kage was running around her and nimbly performing some actions on the telepipe panel. Robocroller waited patiently.

The fox nodded to Ithi, then pressed one of the few buttons on the telepipe and released it.

— I made a bit of a mistake. – Ithi said.

— Yes, we saw it. – Kage retorted

— Didn't rule it out. – he added.

At the same time, Cotton started searching for a new solution and left the lab, while Kage had to gather all the necessary data about Ithi's voyage and guide her to the exit of the institute so that she wouldn't get lost. The fox returned the robocroller's original antenna module, copied some of her logs and deleted more unnecessary files.

When Kage went up to the office, he found Cotton looking familiar to her. She was sitting at her desk, carefully manipulating the spatial applications, turning her head slightly to the side to examine them.

— I was just walking her out. Did you get all the data? – fox asked.

— Of course, while you were coming up. I've already figured out what to do. All we have left is the routine.

— That fast?

— Yes. There's not much difference. Besides, I had the help of a piece of labor…

And Cotton pointed her paw at a document floating nearby. It contained calculations for determining the relationship of similar objects between different universes. The degree of similarity also influenced the calculations.

— We'll find Lineko easily! – Cotton replied softly, – I've already drawn up a program for the calculations. And the program for the telepipe to separate Lineko and Neelo and return him to Deltadim.

— I realized my mistake. I'm sorry. – Kage replied, eyes downcast and head hung low.

Cotton smiled and put a paw to her face.

— You have nothing to apologize for. Specificity – it's relative.

— So all topics are important. – scratching the back of his head, Kage replied.

— Yes. Themes differ in properties. But what matters is how they correspond to objective truth. And you can't assume that a certain property is always an indicator of truth.

— It all depends on the context, Kage concluded.

Cotton nodded approvingly.

The scientists made the necessary calculations and determined where Lineko had been thrown. He was in one of the parks of the city of Sweetenbaum about six and a half thousand kilometers from the place of «death».

Now they needed to find someone who could get Neelo to the lab. To do this, they performed an intelligent search, using as input the characteristics of the florias Lineko had encountered. They were given a contact of a certain Furfy, whom none of them knew personally.

Therefore, Kage and Cotton engaged an additional search that would bring up a chain of mutuals – links of contacts – by which they could reach Furfy.

Eventually, Cotton could have contacted her through Ithi and Tangiee. Cotton told Furfy what happened. She was indeed walking through the park, not far from where Lineko was calculated to be dumped, and was happy to help them.

IX

Furfy loved walking. Especially when the whole town was one big, picturesque park. She sat on a bench with her eyes closed, breathing in the fresh forest air.

The idyllic picture was disturbed by a private message notification from Tangiee.

— Interesting… – thought Furfy.

After her dialog with Cotton, she looked around and stood up. Furfy headed to the search area, which was relatively nearby, also in the back of the park. The cat walked around the river and crossed it over a stone bridge. Next, she turned off the road onto an overgrown path and walked along the bank. To the left she could see a strip of forest, its matted clumps of trees of soft green hues. In the distance they seemed to her like moss, whose touch echoed ghostly in her paws.

Furfy turned aside and went deeper into a thicket of brush and tall. She emerged into the shadows of a forest that stood on uneven terrain. It wasn't very comfortable to walk, but she didn't have to climb.

— What a mess… – Furfy thought to herself.

She came to two small hills cut by protruding rocks. On one of them was a round, overgrown and dilapidated rotunda, like an element of romantic and ruinous style.

Furfy carefully scoured the entire search area, but she couldn't find Lineko. She called out to him. There was no response. Shaking her head, the cat spotted small, densely bushy grottoes in the protruding rocks.

— This way?

She ran down and examined one of them. There was nothing but bushes in this shallow grotto. Walking a little further she saw the same dense forest. Turning back around, Furfy, at first, didn't notice anything. However, when she looked closer, she saw the rectangular outline of an entrance on the shadowed side of the cliff. The cat rushed into the grotto.

— I think we found someone… – Furfy said with a smile, holding a pot of Lineko.

She tickled his nose with her finger, causing him to squint.

Grabbing Lineko, Furfy quickly made her way out of the park. She walked down to the river that bounded the park and crossed it to the valley where her mansion, among others, was located.

There was no one in the mansion – Mist was tightly discussing some major publication with Artem and was currently at CRIS[3].

Furfy cleaned the Lineko and set the pot with it on a small high table, then reached into the intricately curved cabinet. She pulled out a packet of fertilizer and a watering can, fertilized and watered the lemon liberally. Lineko felt somewhat better.

Wasting no time, Furfy prepared the flip, taking sandwiches and juices with her. Then she went back inside and picked up Lineko. She placed him next to her on the seat. Finally, Furfy texted back to Cotton about successfully finding Lineko and asked her to check in with her about where to fly to.

— Omniverse Building. I'll meet you in the lobby. – wrote the rabbit.

The automatic doors opened and Furfy's flip smoothly arced out of the mansion and flew toward Texua, catching up with the landing deltaspark.

◆ ◆ ◆

It was getting dark. The flip was silently and swiftly consuming space. They were flying inland. Due to the peculiarities of the movement, everything around them looked blurred and stretched out in the direction of travel.

The speed of movement of intraverse vehicles, based on special telepipes that create a spherical asymptotic portal around themselves, is proportional to the computing power of their computers that continuously calculate the position of «pieces» of space relative to each other. The flight time of the saucer on which Furfy flew with Lineko was about two hours.

At some point, there was a noticeable change in the structure of the cities. They were no longer evenly sparse, but clustered into dedicated

structures and increasingly strove upward with their vertically-oriented Art Deco architecture.

On approach, the flip «slowed down» and the view became less blurry. The city of Wallen and its two architectural dominants, the Volumetric Hall and Dark Marble Building towers, whizzed by on the right. A moment, and the saucer flies into Teksui.

The lights of the nighttime city form fantastic, airy shapes. You can't see the buildings themselves – only their volumes, stacked with the light lines of windows.

Furfy was a little confused – how not to get lost here, in this shimmering star dust? But the automatic navigator drove their transportation saucer swiftly and accurately, guiding it along the wide expanse of avenues and streets.

Finally, the flip was tossed sideways, whereupon it flew sharply forward and stopped momentarily. The saucer hung at about the height where the tower of the Hazen Building began.

Kage, who was sitting at the window, noticed this «unidentified» flying object. He immediately reported it to Cotton. When she tried to stand up, the fox only waved his hand.

— I'll meet her on the roof.

— Yeah.

Kage quickly told Furfy to get on the roof of the right wing – there were landing places there. He would meet her and show her to her office.

Furfy carefully pointed the saucer to the right, barely recognized the landing place in the darkness and lowered herself onto it. A moment later,

she was already walking through the Florivores' departmental enclosure, led by Kage.

Furfy handed Lineko to him, after which Kage shook her hand firmly, expressing his gratitude, and offered her a break in the lobby near the greenhouses.

X

Kage returned to Cotton's office. Bunny informed him that he was fully ready, and together they made their way to the F8-10 office.

The telepipe door slid open and Cotton carefully placed Lineko in the portal chamber. Limon woke up and even made an attempt to run away, but the rabbit stopped him with a paw and put him back where he belonged.

Kage was already starting to worry, so he repeatedly checked the name of the program before running it. After that, Lineko disappeared.

Next, they went up to the F12-2 office. The moment of truth was coming. Again. They no longer wanted another misunderstanding to add to their workload.

Kage took the remote, and, to relax, collapsed with it in the chair opposite the telepipe while Cotton imported data and programs. When everything was ready, Kage released his tension in an instant, even allowing himself to forget a little. Then he carefully checked the settings and calmly ran the program.

◆ ◆ ◆

Lineko felt strange. The lemon cat couldn't understand what was happening and only listened to his sensations.

He felt that his consciousness went beyond the increasingly blurred boundaries of his body. Lemon felt more and more involuntarily the unity of his consciousness with the surrounding matter. The infinitely moving world was him and he was that world…

Lineko's consciousness finally blurred. It dissolved into a dream. And in that dream, Neelo gradually took his form… To appear in a flash of violet telepipe light…

Completely satisfied that everything had been done correctly, Kage and Cotton sprang to the portal chamber that had opened. Neelo lay unconscious. The scientists carried and sat the lemon cat on the couch. Afterward, Cotton moistened his face with cold water while Kage kneaded his shoulders.

Neelo purred and opened his multi-colored eyes. A little later, he tossed:

— Thank you – and tried to get up.

Then the scientists took him under their arms and headed for the elevators. Afterward, Kage put Neelo in his flip and together they rose above the Omniverse Building.

— Where are we going? – Kage clarified.

— Citrus, 10-1, – Neelo exhaled.

— Great.

◆ ◆ ◆

Neelo stood at the entrance to the lobby of his house. He had almost regained consciousness, but he was very tired and felt lethargic. The cat took his time and headed for the elevators.

No one met Neelo in the hallway, but going into the living room he saw Nala. She was looking at something on the coffee table with interest. Nala turned around and approached Neelo.

— You? – she asked in surprise.

Neelo smiled at her and smirked. He didn't really want to describe everything that had happened to him. And the tortured Nala didn't need these exciting stories.

— It's all over… – Neelo said in a purring tone, soothingly.

The rabbit and the lemon cat hugged each other. Nala only giggled softly, either from relief or mortification. Afterward, Neelo slid onto the couch and fell fast asleep. Nala, on the other hand, snuggled up next to him.

She sat and stroked Neelo's head. And he just rolled over and purred sweetly.

◆ ◆ ◆

Furfy woke up, after hours of sleeping on the couch in the lobby. She made her way up to the parking lot on her own with no problem and left Teksui. The rest of the night she had already slept the rest of the night at her house.

Cotton, apparently finding all this work so suddenly thrust upon her sufficient, changed her plans and didn't start her new job right away. Instead, she took a vacation and went to one of the sanitariums in Zonfels.

Kage prepared a full progress report and discussed the incident as part of a recent Florivores Department meeting. The topic with the reciprocal relationship of the facilities seemed interesting to Kage and he delved deeper into it.

Yolk was relieved to learn that everything had ended happily. She maintained a trusting relationship with Nala and Neelo. They all understood that mistakes were the result of circumstances, and that the most important thing was to work consciously and cooperatively to eliminate the conditions that caused them.

The incident enriched the experience, its comprehension supplemented the knowledge of all the direct participants. And this had some influence on the whole society.

Excessively painful perception is only an illusion, substitution of infinite processes of nature by some unchangeable metaphysical systems. The conclusion is to cognize things as they are.

The world is cognizable infinitely. In the process of cognition, it is inevitable to encounter the unknown. And we must explore new areas, test our ideas by boldly applying them without fear of error. To understand and change things, it is important to study them in real change and interconnection, and to consider their interdependence, which is a key principle of science.

References

1. Research Institute of Universes of Teksui
2. Device for establishing communication between different regions of the universe phase space
3. Celadon Research Institute of Sweetenbaum